

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Namesake is a novel from the author Jhumpa Lahiri which was published in 2003 by a mariner book Houghton Mifflin company, Boston, New York . There are 12 chapters and 289 pages in this novel. It is printed in the United States of America.

The author of this novel is Jhumpa Lahiri. She was born in Nilanjana Sudeshna to Bengali Indian immigrants in London, Jhumpa Lahiri moved with her family to the United States when she was three years old. She grew up in Kingston, Rhode Island and earned a B.A. in English literature from Barnard College in 1989. She went on to earn an M.A. in English, an M.F.A. in Creative Writing, an M.A. in Comparative Literature, and a Ph.D. in Renaissance Studies from Boston University. From 1997-1998, she held a fellowship at Provincetown's Fine Arts Work Center. Lahiri married journalist Alberto Vourvoulias-Bush in 2001. They had two children: Octavio in 2002 and Noor in 2005. The family currently lives in Brooklyn, New York.

The Namesake tells about the Ganguli family who immigrated to the United States from Calcutta and of their children, Gogol and Sonia, raised in the USA. It begins on 1968, Ashima Ganguli a Bengali woman who has recently moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts with her new husband. Her husband was Ashoke. He was a doctoral candidate in electrical engineering at MIT. After a few month, Ashima was pregnant. In that time, Ashoke accompanied his wife to the hospital. In the waiting room of the

hospital, Ashoke remembered how in 1961, as he was taking the train from Calcutta to Jamshedpur to visit his grandfather. He brought some books that were inherited from his grandfather. In his way, there was an accident and he had nearly died. On the train, he had just been reading a collection of short stories by Nikolai Gogol, a Russian author. When the locomotive engine and seven bogies derailed, causing Ashoke was flung into a nearby field. Rescue workers found Ashoke because of the book page he clutched in his hand.

Their baby boy was born in the morning. A few days later, the nurse of the hospital asked to Ashima and Ashoke about the name of their baby. They could not answer the question because they wanted to wait to name him until a letter arrives from Ashima's grandmother with two name options: one for a boy and one for a girl. It was the Bengali tradition to have a respected elder choose the name of a child. However, it was time to leave the hospital and the letter had not arrived. Finally, Ashoke decides to use the name of his favorite author. He believes that the author has saved his live from the accident. His child is the second person that has been saved by the author. This name will be used until they can officially name their baby based on his grandmother's wishes. He names his baby Gogol. Six months later, Ashima's brother Rana who lives in Calcutta calls with the bad news that her father has suffered a heart attack and died. Ashima is extremely upset and they decide to go to Calcutta.

On Gogol's fourteenth birthday, his father comes into his room and gives him birthday present. The present is his favorite book "The Short Stories of Nikolai Gogol". But Gogol don't pay attention to the present. He is more interested in listening to the

Beatles than looking at the book, and he is unable to appreciate it. Ashoke wants to tell Gogol about his favorite author Nikolai Gogol. He begins to tell Gogol about the train accident that made him appreciate the author Gogol but he does not continue his story because he realizes Gogol cannot yet understand about his story. Gogol stashes the book away when his father leaves. The next year, Ashoke and Ashima decide to go to Calcutta for eight months. They want their children to know their parents' hometown. They go to all of favorite places in India. They also go to Taj mahal to show their children one of the greatest buildings in India.

After graduating from senior high school, Gogol takes architecture engineering in Colombia. In that university, He meets his girlfriend her name is Maxime. She is in the same university but different major. A few month later, Maxime asks Gogol to visit her house to dinner with her parent and asks him to stay in Maxine's house. Gogol feels awkward because in his parent's culture, He never does this. He never stays in his girlfriend house and lives with her parent. After a few days, Gogol enjoys staying in Maxine house with her parent. In there, He finds a lot of different culture between his parents and Maxine's parents.

A few years later, Ashoke gets heart attack in the hospital. The doctor cannot help him and he dies. Ashima, Gogol and his sister are sad. Gogol feels guilty to his father because he never does what his father wants. Gogol prefers to use American culture than Indian, his father wants to Gogol to marry an Indian girl. Gogol is responsible to marry Indian girl as his father wishes before died. Few days later, Gogol Meets Moushumi, an Indian girl. They decide to get married in New Jersey in a

ceremony that is almost entirely planned and managed by their parents. They move into an apartment together. They go to Paris in March together; Moushumi is presenting a paper at a conference, so Gogol accompanies her as a vacation. While there, he feels lonely because Moushumi is so obviously at home in the city. Two days after their first wedding anniversary, Moushumi comes across a resume at the university from a man named Dimitri Desjardins whom she knows from her teenage and college years. Moushumi begins having an affair with Dimitri on Mondays and Wednesdays, after she teaches her class. Gogol knows nothing of his wife's affair with Dimitri. He has the vague feeling that something is not right in his marriage with Moushumi, but he can't put his finger on what.

A year later, before Christmas of the year 2000, Gogol's sister Sonia and Ben are going to be married in Calcutta in a little over a year, and few month later, Gogol and Moushumi decided to get a divorce. Ashima has decided to move out of the house on Pemberton Road to spend six months at a time in Calcutta with her family and six months in the United States with her children and friends. Finally, Ashima spends the holiday at the house on Calcutta, Gogol does his job as an architecture and Sonia lives with her husband.

There are many responses to this novel. Most of them give a good response, the first is from New York Times states that "Quietly dazzling . . . *The Namesake* is that rare thing: an intimate, closely observed family portrait that effortlessly and discreetly unfolds to disclose a capacious social vision . . . a debut novel that is as assured and eloquent as the work of a longtime master of the craft." The second is from Elle, she

states that “Lahiri handles issue of assimilation and belonging with her trade mark mix of quite observation and heartbreaking honesty . . . the casual beauty of the writing keeps the pages turning.” The third is from Boston globe states that “poignant . . . A novel of exquisite and subtle tension, spanning two generation and continents and a plethora of emotional compromises in between . . . *The Namesake* is a story of guilt and liberation; it speaks to the universal struggle to extricate ourselves from the past – from family and obligation and the curse of history.”

She has won many awards, including the TransAtlantic Award from the Henfield Foundation (1993), the O. Henry Award for the short story "Interpreter of Maladies" (1999), the PEN/Hemingway Award for Best Fiction Debut of the Year for the Interpreter of Maladies collection, and most recently the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award (2008) and the Asian American Literay Award (2009), both for Unaccustomed Earth.

There are four reasons why the writer is interested in studying this novel. The first is the reflection of the character and characterization in *The Namesake* (2003) novel. Jhumpa Lahiri tells the story to the readers about how an Indian immigrant family live America that have different culture. How the first generation defenses the Indian culture but the second generation of Indian family prefer to use American culture than Indian culture.

The second aspect is where the story takes place or setting. *The Namesake* takes setting almost in America to support the novel. It draws the difference between Indian and American culture. Indian cultures are very much family oriented. Indians

respect family values. Americans are individual oriented. Americans are more committed to themselves only. In American culture, each individual makes his own decisions and their privacy a lot.

The third is the plot of the story in the novel. The story of this novel is not difficult to be understood, because the plot of story is in conventional (traditional) namely: exposition, complication, climax, resolution, causality, and plausibility. It tells about the event and problem in family situation that usually happens in daily life.

Fourth, the conflicts of cultural values found in the novel are about tradition, custom, family value, social value and how they adapt with new culture. It makes the intimacy of their family come into dilemmas and clashes. The sociological problems found in the novel are about Indian and American culture. The differences of social culture make many problems in the society in Indian.

The researcher uses sociological theory as an approach to analyze this novel, because the story of the novel is about conflicts of cultural value between Indian parent and their Indian American son. That's why, the researcher gives the title :
**CONFLICTS OF CULTURAL VALUES REFLECTED IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S
*THE NAMESAKE: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF LITERATURE.***

B. Literature Review

There are six literature reviews related to *The Namesake* novel by Jhumpa Lahiri:

The first is “*Gogol’s identity crisis in America as seen in Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake*” conducted by Retno (Sanata Dharma University, 2011). The focus of this study is on Gogol’s identity crisis in America. It deals with his problem about his way of life in America. The problem mainly comes up from his pet name and additionally from his life in America. It is interesting because later, his identity crisis encourages him to do something in making a decision in his life. Considering aforementioned explanations, this study proposes three problems to be analyzed. They are: (1) what identity crisis does Gogol experience? (2) how does he overcome his identity crisis? (3) what are his motivations in overcoming his identity crisis?

The second is “*Psychosocial crises in Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake*” conducted by Nur’aini (UIN Malang, 2011). This study is categorized as literary criticism since this study is emphasized on the analysis of a literary work, including description, analysis, and interpretation of a literary work, namely the novel of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*. This primary data of this study are collected from Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*. The researcher applies a psychological approach especially Erik Erikson’s theory which are talking about the psychosocial crises of Gogol based on his strange name.

The third is “*Kedirian (self-consciousness) sebagai bentuk identitas tokoh dalam novel karya Jhumpa Lahiri The Namesake*” conducted by Waluyo (UI, 2011).

This thesis uses descriptive and syntagmatic and paradigmatic method as a method to explain and analyze a problem. To analysis uses Erik H. Erikson theory about identity of youth from his book *Identity : Youth and crisis*.

The fourth is “*Nama dan identitas budaya dalam novel The Namesake karya Jhumpa Lahiri*” conducted by Sabbah (UI, 2009). The focus of this study is about naming and cultural identity in a cultural diversity context. Identity problem occur in a cultural diversity world because of differences that exist and cultural clashes that happens between the immigrant culture and the dominant culture in a multicultural world. Conflict in defining identity in the midst of cultural difference causes identity crisis. In the end, this novel shows how each character can negotiate differences, reinvent identity and more dynamically between spaces.

The fifth is “*The Representation of Indian culture in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake*” conducted by Armeilita (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2012). In the film, the issue of Marxist-Social Feminism is reflected on Rebecca Sharp characterizations. Her four characterizations are charm, quick wit, ambitious, and strong minded. Each of characterizations shows the Marxist-Social Feminism. First, Charm leads her into the alienation of sexuality referring to Social feminism; and for Marxist concept that the man who tried to rape her can be categorized as capitalist and Rebecca is a labor that he has everything she has. Second, quick wit means having the intelligence that leads her into the alienation of intellectuality since Mrs. Pinkerton oppresses her to not to have the educational chance for she is the poor girl and it is as Marxist sees that the people who do not have nobility can not have the educational

chance even though she has wit. Third, her ambitious characterization leads her into the alienation of motherhood as the social feminism belief. Alienation of motherhood means the every single mother sees her children as her products and wants to create them as the society wants. The last but not least, her strong-minded characterization is made up since she is little girl where the capitalism leads her own country as the result its characterization leads her life to have the better life. It can be seen when Marxist sees the capitalism as the main problem of the women oppression.

The sixth is “*Konflik yang dialami tokoh Gogol dalam menjalani kehidupan dua budaya pada film The Namesake karya Mira Nair*” conducted by Ratna (Undip, 2009). This thesis is aimed to analyze the conflicts which are faced by Gogol, one of the characters in the movie entitled “*The Namesake*”. The method of research in writing this thesis is library research. The methods of approaches that the writer uses are structural approach, sociology of literature and psychological theory. The structural approach is used to analyze intrinsic aspects such as character, setting and conflict. Besides that, the writer also uses cinematography theory since this thesis uses movie as the object. The sociology of literature is used only in observation of Indian culture and American culture in “*The Namesake*” movie. Meanwhile, in the psychological theory, the writer uses psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud which consists of id, ego, and superego. Through the analysis, the writer finds that Gogol faces a lot of conflicts, both internal and external. The conflicts appear because three structures in psychoanalytical theory (id, ego and superego) are not integrated well and do not work in harmony. Besides that,

the writer also finds that there is culture clash between Indian culture and American culture which gives certain effects in Gogol's life.

This research is different from the others because in this study, the researcher uses sociological study of literature to develop in analyzing the novel especially cultural value setting. The cultural value found in social setting. The researcher uses the theory of Alan Swingewood related to elements and forms of sociological literature. It is related to how the conflicts of culture values reflected in the novel.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the previous background of the study, the writer proposed the problem "How are conflicts of culture values reflected in *The Namesake* novel (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri using sociological study of literature?"

From the major problem statement above can be broke down into:

1. What are the characteristics of two cultures in *The Namesake* novel?
2. How are conflicts of cultural values portrayed in *The Namesake* novel?
3. Why does the second generation of immigrant's prefer to use American culture than the Indian culture?

D. Limitation of the Study

The researcher focuses this research in analyzing conflicts of cultural values reflected in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*: a sociological study of literature.

E. Objectives of the Study

In carrying this research the researcher formulates the objectives of the study as follows are:

1. To describe *The Namesake* based on structural elements of the novel.
2. To analyze conflicts of cultural value reflected in *The Namesake* novel (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri using sociological study of literature.

F. The Benefits of the Study

The researcher really hopes that his research on *The Namesake* has benefits. The benefits of this study will be distinguished in to two benefits:

1. Theoretical Benefits

The result of this study is expected to be able to give information and contribution the development of knowledge.

2. Practical Benefits

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and another student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another University who are interested in literary study on the novel from a sociological study of literature.

G. Reasearch Method

1. Type of the Study

In this research, the researcher uses qualitative research. It is library research while data sources are using literary data. Its purposed to analyze the novel using sociological study of literature. The steps to conduct this research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining data and data source, (4) determining technique of data collection, (5) determining technique of data analysis.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is conflicts of cultural values reflected in *The Namesake* novel (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri. It is analyzed by using sociological study of literature.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

There are two data sources that are needed to do this research, namely: primary data sources and secondary data sources.

a. Primary data source

The primary data source is *The Namesake* novel (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri.

b. Secondary data source

The secondary data sources are other sources related the study, such as: website, dictionary, some books that support the analysis.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The methods of collecting data are documentation the picture and note taking ,with the following steps:

- a. Reading the original novel several times.
- b. Determining the character that will be analyzed.
- c. Taking note of the important thing both of primary and secondary data sources.
- d. Classifying and determining the relevant data.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The technique used in analysis the data is descriptive analysis. It concerns with structural element of the novel on *The Namesake* novel (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri.

H. Research Paper Organization

The research paper organization of “Conflicts of Cultural Values Reflected in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*: A Sociological Study of Literature” consists of six chapters.

Chapter I is Introduction, which consists of background of the study, literary review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, theoretical approach, research method, and research paper organization. Chapter II is Underlying Theory. It deals with notion of sociology of literature, major principles of sociology of literature, structural elements of the novel and theoretical application. Chapter III presents the Social Historical Background of American Society in the early twentieth century that consists of social, economic, political, science and technology, cultural and religious aspect. Chapter IV is Structural Analysis of *The Namesake* novel; (1) the structural elements of *The Namesake* novel. It consist of character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, style and theme, (2) discussion. Chapter V presents the Sociological Analysis of *The Namesake* novel. It consists of social, economic, political, science and technology, cultural and religious aspect. Chapter VI presents Conclusion and Pedagogical implication.